

The First Rider

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Summary: Far before the time of Hiccup, there was another rider... the first.

The First Rider

The First Rider:

Prelude

Berk, a newer yet established island tucked away in the fierce ocean. It's icy breeze and rough waters kept most well away from it, keeping it safe from their hostile neighbors. Food never grew to the size and bounty that it did on other islands, leaving the people of Berk eating a diet primarily of mutton with the occasional vegetable or fruit tossed in there. A dense pine forest covered the majority of the island with only a small section cleared, which explained some of the cliff dwellings that had been built out of lack of space. The small homes that decorated the sparse space were small with shabby, poorly built wood furniture; it was understandable though, as most of the houses and their entrails would be gone by the week's end.

Though Berk was too cold for mosquitoes and typical crop-killing pests, it didn't mean that Berk was pest-free. Wolves would raid traps set for larger game animals and a few bold ones would even come into the heart of Berk to take sheep. Wolves however had always been the least of the Berkians' concerns. A wolf, no matter how vicious and hungry, would dare to attack the big, burly Vikings that resided on the smaller island. A wolf, no matter how angry, would ever destroy four huts at once. A wolf, no matter how lithe and springy, would ever fly away with an entire flock of sheep. Wolves were only capable of so much. A dragon, however, could do those deeds with ease. A dragon, no matter how small and timid, could critically injure and or kill those big, burly Vikings on Berk. A dragon, no matter how tranquil, could burn four huts at once into cinders with ease and suffer no remorse. A dragon, no matter how plump and lazy,

could fly off with a flock of sheep dangling from its talons. Those were the morals Hazel was taught and lived by.

The logic that a wolf wouldn't be brave nor bold enough to steal a sheep from its flock was ingrained in Hazel's mind. It was the reason her father forbade the killing of the dog-like beasts on his land. Hazel's father raised the majority of the sheep for Berk, distributing pounds and pounds of mutton to the Berkian population. He had flocks and flocks of sheep, all of which he watched all day everyday so no wolves would dare to come near. Hazel would often marvel at her father for being able to defend his flocks of sheep from the wolves and more impressively, the dragons who raided Berk every other night. Her father had devised a brilliant plan that not even the intelligent, powerful fire breathing reptiles couldn't penetrate: Hazel's father kept his sheep in an underground barn at night. He hadn't lost a single sheep since he inherited the flocks from Hazel's grandfather. She had only asked her father why he didn't share his idea with the rest of Berk once. Like every other question, he had swiftly and confidently replied that a surplus of other sheep herders would most definitely steal his main customer if he told them how to force the dragons to spare their sheep along with the fact that the dragons would then find a loop-hole in the system and end up leaving with all the sheep.

Hazel hadn't questioned him nor blabbed about the underground sheep pen simply because she knew her father was right; if their main customer, the chief himself, switched to another herder, that she and her father would have a harder time providing for themselves. Besides, the sheep kept his mind off of what most parents pushed their children to do: train to fight the dangerous, scaly monsters that terrorized Berk. Hazel had always been quiet and frail in comparison to the other Vikings. She would often be accused of refusing food, when in all truthfulness, Hazel ate just as much as the other Berkians. She could eat and eat and eat and never gain any bulk. No matter how loudly she yelled, it would just come out as a whisper in comparison to the other Vikings. Her father didn't say it, but the looks he'd shoot her spoke louder than words; she knew her father feared that she'd have a difficult time finding a spouse. She had no muscle, no lungs, and most importantly, no blood lust. Hazel would ponder if her mother had been frail and peaceful like her. She wouldn't be surprised since she died in childbirth and Hazel had been a small baby. Perhaps it was a fluke, but Hazel didn't care to look into it. She was content with herself being frail and useless in the overall Viking community.

While most Vikings her age were training to slay dragons, Hazel wasn't training to do anything. Not to bake bread, not to become a blacksmith, not to repair homes, she wasn't even herding sheep with her father! The only activities Hazel participated in were walking about in the woods and sketching. She'd often link the two activities together, drawing the lovely, captivating scenery of the forest. It was beautiful in the summer, and bleak in the winter. No matter the season, rain or shine Hazel would slap her helmet on and go out into that forest to draw. She'd seen almost everything from wolf pups to landslides, all of which she'd sketched out. The only thing she hadn't sketched were the beasts themselves. They never stayed still long enough for her to capture their details. She had however, captured their destruction on paper many, many, many times. Every time the monsters would rear their destructive heads Hazel would huddle in front of her window which faced the part of Berk that got

hit the hardest each time; her book and pencil in hand as she struggled to capture the flames' shape and form as they'd consume the huts and homes. Part of her hoped that the destruction would never end, thus guaranteeing a wild and exciting sketch.

End
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